

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, November 30, 2012

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Action Item Calendar

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December 7: [Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement](#) form due
December 19: Personnel-assignment updates due (see below)

Notes from Commissioner Gist

1. Commissioner returns full-time to RIDE

This has been my first week back to work full-time as Commissioner, and I can't tell you great it feels to be at RIDE once

again doing the work I love. I am very grateful for all the cards, notes, thoughts, and prayers I received throughout my recovery, and I am grateful for what you do every day in your community to support teaching and learning and to prepare all of our students for success. Together, we are engaged in a monumental effort that will dramatically change education in our state and will transform the lives of our students. I know that, thanks to the excellent leadership across the state and to David Abbott's stewardship at RIDE, we didn't skip a beat during my absence. I could not be more dedicated and committed to the work we're doing together, and I could not be more confident in our success.

2. Rhode Islanders pledge to support education at EducationPledgeRI.org

In September, the members of the Race to the Top Steering Committee initiated the "I Pledge" campaign, which encourages all Rhode Islanders to pledge their support for our students and our teachers. We developed this campaign to respond to concerns teachers and union leaders expressed about the negative attitude many in the public have adopted toward education. We wanted to establish a campaign through which people could express their support for our educators and students. By pledging their support, Rhode Islanders are conveying the message that we are all in this together – students, parents, teachers, school leaders, labor leaders, and the community at large. None of us can transform education in our state by working alone; it's going to take all Rhode Islanders working together.

To date, about 8,200 people have visited the I Pledge website - www.EducationPledgeRI.org – to show their support for education. I want to encourage you to keep up your good work in building public awareness of the I Pledge campaign in your

community. In particular, we would like to see more pledges coming from parents and other interested citizens. If you or a trusted spokesperson in your community can reach out to parents and other residents through PTA meetings, at Open House nights at your schools, through listservs, or through local media, we can continue to build participation in this important campaign.

From RIDE

Public Events:

3. Youth at Risk Coalition to hold forum on truancy prevention

Our Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports would like to make you aware of an upcoming Rhode Island Youth at Risk Coalition forum focused on truancy prevention. The forum will feature two nationally known speakers – Pamela Toohey, presenting information on trauma-informed practices, and Margaret Jones, on positive youth development – in addition to a panel discussing effective and positive practices in Rhode Island. For more information, see <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=o9xkuz eab&oeidk=a07e6nhql2f9edf875e> or contact the New Hope Time Exchange at the Parent Support Network of Rhode Island at 383-4884. Please feel free to share with appropriate people in your community and to encourage them to attend.

Assessments:

4. RIDE seeks educator input by December 14 on social studies item bank for interim assessments

Our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum is soliciting educator input as the Rhode Island Interim Assessments project embarks on the creation of an item bank for social studies for the test-construction tool in the Instructional Management System (IMS). This tool is planned to launch during the next (2013-14) school year.

Items will be created in alignment with the Rhode Island Social Studies Grade-Span Expectations (GSEs); however, at this time item development cannot address all of the GSEs. Therefore, to create the item bank, we need to identify target standards for assessment. We are seeking input from K-12 teachers through an initial survey that will identify the target standards that contain the most essential, highest priority, or most foundational concepts and skills in the GSEs. A subsequent survey will list the stems selected through this initial survey and their indicators for the identification of the individual standards for each grade span. We will use the standards that the initial survey identifies to create the initial item bank. It is possible that future development can focus on the remaining standards.

The survey, which will close on Friday, **December 14**, is available at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SS-GSEs-Stems-InterimAssessments>

The Social Studies GSEs documents (in PDF and Word format) can be found at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/civics.aspx#gse>.

If you have any questions, please contact
Kamlyn.Keith@ride.ri.gov.

We would like input from as many teachers as possible so that we base our decisions on a representative sampling. We would appreciate it you would forward this announcement to your social studies teachers to encourage their participation. Thank you!

5. High schools asked to submit information for AP fee waivers – *Action Item*

Under the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) Advanced Placement Test Fee Waiver Program, RIDE receives federal funding to provide College Board Advanced Placement tests to low-income students at a reduced rate. The purpose of the Advanced Placement Test Fee Reimbursement Program is to alleviate some of the financial burdens that prevent many economically disadvantaged students from taking the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) test.

Currently, there is no funding available from the USDOE; however, in the anticipation of available funding, our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum is asking all AP Test Coordinators to complete a survey identifying the number of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch who will take AP exams. We need the results of this survey so that we can gather the information necessary for the application for the Advanced Placement Test Fee Waiver Program if and when funding becomes available. It is important that every high school complete a survey so that we have an accurate count of students when we apply for funds. Please provide AP Test Coordinators with the following link to access the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/APTestWaiver>

Test coordinators must complete the survey by **Thursday** (December 6).

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Jennifer Golenia, at 222-8406 or jennifer.golenia@ride.ri.gov.

Grant Opportunities:

6. LEAs encouraged to apply for Integrating Practices and Content in Mathematics and Science grant by December 21

The Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) program provides formula grants to states under ESEA Title II, Part B Sec. 2201, 2202, and 2203, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The purpose of the program is to fund professional-development activities that are designed to improve teachers' content knowledge and teaching skills and that lead to improved academic achievement of students in the areas of mathematics and science through partnerships between institutions of higher education and local educational agencies (LEAs). The Integrating Practices and Content in Mathematics and Science grant is designed to respond to the needs expressed concerning mathematics and science statewide.

RIDE is seeking LEAs to partner with an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) to enhance student learning and teacher instruction using the Common Core State Standards (mathematics) or the Next Generation Science Standards. Professional development will be centered on the integration and intersection of mathematical practices and content or the integration and intersection of practices, crosscutting concepts,

and disciplinary core ideas in science. The partnership requires an LEA (or LEA partnership) and an IHE to engage in an intense professional-development program beginning next summer and to rigorously evaluate the initial effectiveness of that program at the end of the next (2013-14) school year.

The application and related materials are available at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/MathSci/2013_Integration_Application.pdf

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/MathSci/2013_Integration_Application-Appendix A Coversheet.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/MathSci/2013_Integration_Application-Appendix_A_Coversheet.pdf)
(required)

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/MathSci/2013_Integration_Application-Appendix B Statement-of-Assurances.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/MathSci/2013_Integration_Application-Appendix_B_Statement-of-Assurances.pdf) (required)

For questions regarding this application, please contact Jennifer Golenia, Science and Technology Specialist in our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum at Jennifer.golenia@ride.ri.gov or 222-8406.

Please send all completed applications to the Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum to Mona Gevorkian, at mona.gevorkian@ride.ri.gov, or by fax, to the attention of Mona Gevorkian at 222-3605. All completed applications are due by the close of business on **December 21**. Award notifications will be made by January 16.

Data Collection:

7. LEAs encouraged to review policy on Contributing Educators as part of Teacher Course Student data submission

Thank you everyone for working to get your Teacher Course Student (TCS) data submitted to us. If you haven't done this already, please remember to review RIDE Contributing Educator policy

(<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EdEvalRIGM.aspx>) and your local policies, share this information with your faculty, and include Contributing Educators as part of the TCS collection. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Mary Ann Snider, at maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov, or Lisa Foehr, at lisa.foehr@ride.ri.gov.

8. RIDE announces new data-collection processes, asks for personnel-assignment updates by December 19 – *Action Item*

RIDE is pleased to announce the launch of a new certification system that will replace the current online certification system. This new system –eCert – will be available on January 3. eCert is a secure, user-friendly system that all educators will access via the statewide systems portal called RIDEMap.

We are also pleased to announce the launch of a process that will allow LEAs to report assignment data regarding certified educators. This new process –the Personnel Data Collection (PDC) – will replace the existing Personnel Assignment Process (PAP) and will be part of the set of data collections that are housed under the eRIDE portal. We will launch the PDC on January 17. Our Office of Educator Quality and Certification has shared this information with all human-resources directors through the

human-resources listserv. Please complete your PAP updates by **December 19** to help us ensure the most accurate data transfer from PAP to PDC.

For more information the eCert System and on the dates associated with PDC system, see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/eCert.aspx>

9. Schools must provide evidence of course content, material for correct assignment of course codes

For the past two years, Mary Neuman and Jason Cotoia have been coding middle- and high-school courses according to the National SCEDs course coding system. At the high-school level, these course codes are vitally important as this is the information that will be included on official high-school transcripts. High schools that do not supply evidence of course material will not be given the applicable course code. For example, if a school lists a course as Algebra II but cannot provide evidence that the content of the course includes all of the information outlined by the national classification system, the school will not receive an Algebra II course code. In this instance, the school would receive a code of "Algebra other."

This will be the procedure for all courses that do not meet SCED criteria: The school will receive a content code (Algebra, Chemistry, Literature, etc.), but the code will be coded as "other." In this way, a school can still access interim assessments and other materials as appropriate. But the school will not be permitted to use a code for which the school cannot prove course content. This process ensure that all students are offered the

rigorous content they need to be successful in college and careers.

If you disagree with a course-coding decision, please contact Mary Ann Snider, at 222-8492 or maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov. Mary Ann will consult with her content staff to review each case and to reach a coding decision. If you have any questions about Course Coding, contact Peg Votta. at 222-8412 or Margaret.votta@ride.ri.gov.

Charter Public Schools:

10. Charter newsletter reports on charter-district collaborations

Our Office of Transformation notes that the National Charter School Resources Center Newsletter contains information on thoughtful strategies for collaborations between charter public schools and school districts. The current newsletter is available here:

<http://view.exacttarget.com/?j=fe5316797d6d037e7314&m=fefc1575706602&ls=fdb9157170630675701d797761&l=fe501576706d0374771c&s=fe29117377600179711275&jb=ffcf14&ju=fe2417747d63037f721170>

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>